

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (**Currently Amended**) A method for producing crystalline maltitol, comprising the steps of:

feeding a first maltitol aqueous solution having a solid content of maltitol of 70 to 97 wt% and a temperature of 90 to 120°C to a kneader so as to knead and cool it,

then feeding a second maltitol aqueous solution having ~~a higher solid content than that of the first maltitol aqueous solution~~ a solid content of 97.5 to 99.5 wt% and a temperature of 120 to 140°C to the kneader and further kneading and cooling the resulting mixture so as to produce a plastic mass,

cooling the produced plastic mass so as to solidify it, and
pulverizing the solidified mass.

2. (**Canceled**)

3. (**Currently Amended**) A method for producing crystalline maltitol, comprising the steps of:

feeding a maltitol aqueous solution having a solid content of 97.5 to 99.5 wt% and a temperature of 120 to 140°C to a kneader so as to knead and cool it,

then adding water to the kneader and further kneading and cooling the mixture so as to produce a plastic mass,

cooling the produced plastic mass so as to solidify it, and

pulverizing the solidified mass.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein water is added ~~several times~~, in an amount of 1.0 to 7.0 parts by weight based on 100 parts by weight of the maltitol aqueous solution.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 or 3, wherein the kneader is a continuous kneading-extruding machine having a cooler.

7. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the crystalline maltitol is produced without using seed crystals.

8. (New) The method of claim 3, wherein the crystalline maltitol is produced without using seed crystals.